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(54) **Method for testing the bit error ratio of a device**

(57) A method for testing the Bit Error Ratio BER of a device against a maximal allowable Bit Error Ratio BER_{limit} with an early pass and/or early fail criterion, whereby the early pass and/or early fail criterion is allowed to be wrong only by a small probability D . n s bits of the output of the device are measured, thereby n e erroneous bits of these n s bits are detected. PD_{high} and/or PD_{low} are obtained, whereby PD_{high} is the worst possible likelihood distribution and PD_{low} is the best possible likelihood distribution containing the measured n e erroneous bits with the probability D . The average numbers of erroneous bits NE_{high} and NE_{low} for PD_{high} and PD_{low} are obtained. NE_{high} and NE_{low} are compared with $NE_{limit} = BER_{limit} \cdot n$ s. If NE_{limit} is higher than NE_{high} or NE_{limit} is lower than NE_{low} the test is stopped.

BER limit = 0.2 (1/5) Actual BER = 0.25 (1/4)

Number of samples, Sequence, 0: correct, 1: error	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 etc...
Sequence	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
BER		1/2	1/3	1/4	1/5	2/6	2/7	2/8	2/9	3/10
BER norm		5/2	5/3	5/4	5/5	10/6	10/7	10/8	10/9	15/10

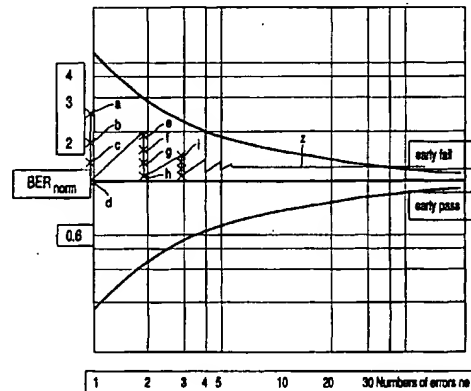


Fig. 3

Description

[0001] The application is related to testing the Bit Error Ratio of a device, such as a digital receiver for mobile phones.

[0002] Testing digital receivers is two fold: The receiver is offered a signal, usually accompanied with certain stress conditions. The receiver has to demodulate and to decode this signal. Due to stress conditions the result can be partly erroneous. The ratio of erroneously demodulated to correctly demodulated bits is measured in the Bit Error Ratio (BER) test. The BER test is subject of this application.

[0003] BER testing is time consuming. This is illustrated by the following example: a frequently used BER limit is 0.001. The bitrate frequently used for this test is approx. 10kbit/s. Due to statistical relevance it is not enough to observe 1 error in 1000 bits. It is usual to observe approx. 200 errors in 200 000 bits. This single BER test lasts 20 seconds. There are combined tests which contain this single BER test several times, e.g. the receiver blocking test. Within this test the single BER test is repeated 12750 times with different stress conditions. Total test time here is more than 70h. It is known in the state of the art to fail the DUT (Device Under Test) early only, when a fixed number of errors as 200 errors are observed before 200 000 bits are applied. (Numbers from the example above).

[0004] It is the object of the present application to propose a method for testing the Bit Error Ratio of a device with reduced test time, preserving the statistical relevance.

[0005] The object is solved by the features of claim 1 or claim 4.

[0006] According to the present invention, the worst possible likelihood distribution PD_{high} and/or the best possible likelihood distribution PD_{low} are obtained by the formulas given in claim 1 and 4, respectively. From these likelihood distributions, the average number NE_{high} or NE_{low} is obtained and compared with the limit NE_{limit} , respectively. If the limit NE_{limit} is higher than the average number NE_{high} or smaller than the average number NE_{low} , the test is stopped and it is decided that the device has early passed or early failed, respectively.

[0007] The dependent claims contain further developments of the invention.

[0008] The Poisson distribution preferably used for the present invention, is best adapted to the BER problem. The nature of the Bit Error occurrence is ideally described by the binomial distribution. This distribution, however, can only be handled for small number of bits and errors. For a high number of bits and a low Bit Error Ratio the binomial distribution is approximated by the Poisson distribution. This prerequisite (high number of bits, low BER) is ideally fulfilled for normal Bit Error Rate testing (BER limit 0.001) as long as the DUT is not totally broken (BER 0.5). The application proposes to overcome problems with the discrete nature of the Poisson distribution. With the same method an early pass condition as well as an early fail condition is derived.

[0009] An embodiment of the invention is described hereafter. In the drawings

Fig. 1 shows a diagram to illustrate the inventive method,

Fig. 2 shows the referenced Bit Error Ratio ber_{norm} as a function of the measured errors ne and

Fig. 3 shows a diagram to illustrate a measurement using the inventive method.

[0010] In the following, the early fail condition and the early pass condition is derived with mathematical methods.

[0011] Due to the discrete nature of the Poisson distribution the early fail and the early stop conditions are not defined at the very beginning of the test. The application contains proposals, how to conduct the test at this undefined areas. The proposals are conservative (not risky). A DUT on the limit does not achieve any early stop condition. The application proposes to stop the test unconditioned at a specific number K (for example 200 bit) errors. It describes the worst case property of a DUT under this condition.

[0012] Based on a single measurement, a confidence range CR around this measurement is derived. It has the property that with high probability the final result can be found in this range.

[0013] The confidence range CR is compared with the specified BER limit. From the result a diagram is derived containing the early fail and the early pass condition.

[0014] As the diagram is not defined over the entire range, proposals are given how to conduct the test, where the diagram is undefined.

[0015] With a finite number of samples ns of measured bits, the final Bit Error Ratio BER cannot be determined exactly. Applying a finite number of samples ns , a number of errors ne is measured. $ne/ns = ber$ is the preliminary Bit Error Ratio.

[0016] In a single test a finite number of measured bits ns is applied, and a number of errors ne is measured. ne is connected with a certain differential probability in the Poisson distribution. The probability and the position in the distribution conducting just one single test is not known.

[0017] Repeating this test infinite times, applying repeatedly the same ns , the complete Poisson distribution is obtained. The average number (mean value) of errors is NE . NE/ns is the final BER. The Poisson distribution has the

variable ne and is characterised by the parameter NE , the average or mean value. Real probabilities to find ne between two limits are calculated by integrating between such limits. The width of the Poisson distribution increases proportional to \sqrt{NE} , that means, it increases absolutely, but decreases relatively.

[0018] In a single test ns samples are applied and ne errors are measured. The result can be a member of different Poisson distributions each characterized by another parameter NE . Two of them are given as follows:

[0019] The worst possible distribution NE_{high} , containing the measured ne with the probability D_1 , is given by

$$D_1 = \int_0^{ne} PD_{high}(NE_{high}, ni) dni \quad (1)$$

[0020] In the example D_1 is $0.002=0.2\%$ PD_{high} is the wanted Poisson distribution with the variable ni . ne is the measured number of errors.

[0021] The best possible distributions NE_{low} , containing the measured ne with the probability D_2 is given by

$$D_2 = \int_{ne}^{\infty} PD_{low}(NE_{low}, ni) dni \quad (2)$$

[0022] In the example D_2 is equal D_1 and it is $D = D_1 = D_2 = 0.002=0.2\%$.

[0023] To illustrate the meaning of the range between NE_{low} and NE_{high} refer to Fig. 1. Fig. 1 shows the likelihood density PD as a function of the measured number of errors ne . In the example, the actual detected number of errors ne within the measured sample of ns bits is 10. The likelihood distribution of the errors is not known. The worst possible likelihood distribution PD_{high} under all possible likelihood distributions as well as the best possible likelihood distribution PD_{low} under all possible likelihood distributions are shown. The worst possible likelihood distribution PD_{high} is characterized in that the integral from 0 to $ne = 10$ gives a total probability of $D_1 = 0.002$. The best possible likelihood distribution PD_{low} is characterized in that the integral from $ne = 10$ to ∞ gives a total probability of $D_2 = 0.002$. In the preferred embodiment D_1 is equal to D_2 , i.e. $D_1 = D_2 = 0.002 = 0.2\%$. After having obtained the likelihood distribution PD_{high} and PD_{low} from formulas (1) and (2), the average values or mean values NE_{high} for the likelihood distribution PD_{high} and NE_{low} for the likelihood distribution PD_{low} can be obtained. The range between the mean value NE_{low} and NE_{high} is the confidence range CR indicated in Fig. 1.

[0024] In the case the measured value ne is a rather untypical result (in the example just 0.2% probability) nevertheless the final result NE can still be found in this range, called confidence range CR .

[0025] The probabilities D_1 and D_2 in (1) and (2) can be independent, but preferable they are dependent and equal ($D = D_1 = D_2$).

[0026] With the inverse cumulative Poisson distribution $qpois(D, ne)$ NE_{low} and NE_{high} can be obtained. The inputs for the inverse cumulative Poisson distribution $qpois(D, ne)$ are the number of errors ne , measured in this test and the probabilities D and $C = 1 - D$. The Output of the inverse cumulative Poisson distribution $qpois(D, ne)$ is NE , the parameter describing the average of the Poisson distribution.

[0027] The following example is illustrated in Fig. 1 ($D = D_1 = D_2$):

Number of errors: $ne=10$

Probability: $D=0.002$ $C=0.998$

Result:

[0028] $NE_{low} = qpois(D, ne) = 2$

$NE_{high} = qpois(C, ne) = 20$

Interpretation:

[0029] Having measured $ne=10$ errors in a single test, then with a low probability $D=0.002$ the average number of errors NE in this test is outside the range from 2 to 20 or with a high probability $C=0.998$ inside this range from 2 to 20.

[0030] Such as the width of the Poisson distribution, the confidence range CR increases proportional to \sqrt{ne} , that means, it increases absolutely, but decreases relatively.

[0031] If the entire confidence range CR, calculated from a single result ne , is found on the good side ($NE_{limit} > NE_{high}$) of the specified limit NE_{limit} we can state: With high probability C , the final result NE is better than the limit NE_{limit} . Whereby NE_{limit} is given by

$$NE_{limit} = BER_{limit} \cdot ns \quad (4a)$$

and BER_{limit} is the Bit Error Rate allowable for the device and obtained by an ideal long test with an infinite high number of bit samples ns .

[0032] If the entire confidence range CR, calculated from a single result ne , is found on the bad side ($NE_{limit} < NE_{low}$) of the specified limit NE_{limit} we can state: With high probability C , the final result NE is worse than the limit.

[0033] With each new sample and/or error a new test is considered, reusing all former results. With each new test the preliminary data for ns , ne and ber is updated. For each new test the confidence range CR is calculated and checked against the test limit NE_{limit} .

[0034] Once the entire confidence range CR is found on the good side of the specified limit ($NE_{limit} > NE_{high}$), an early pass is allowed. Once the entire confidence range CR is found on the bad side of the specified limit ($NE_{limit} < NE_{low}$) an early fail is allowed. If the confidence range CR is found on both sides of the specified limit ($NE_{low} < NE_{limit} < NE_{high}$), it is evident neither to pass nor to fail the DUT early.

[0035] Fig. 1 illustrates the above conditions. Of course, NE_{limit} is a fixed value not altering during the test, but NE_{low} and NE_{high} as well as the confidence range CR are altering during the test. For reasons of illustration, however, the three possibilities of the possible positions of the confidence range CR with respect to the constant limit NE_{limit} are drawn for the same example in Fig. 1.

[0036] The above can be described by the following formulas:

[0037] The current number of samples ns is calculated from the preliminary Bit Error Ratio ber and the preliminary number of errors ne

$$ber = ne/ns \quad (3)$$

[0038] After a full test the final Bit Error Ratio is

$$BER_{limit} = NE_{limit} / ns \quad (4)$$

for abbreviation in the formula:

$$ber_{norm} = ber/BER_{limit} = ne/NE_{limit} \quad (5)$$

(normalised ber)

[0039] Early pass stipulates:

$$NE_{high} < NE_{limit} \quad (6)$$

[0040] Early fail stipulates:

$$NE_{low} > NE_{limit} \quad (7)$$

[0041] Formula for the early pass limit:

$$ber_{norm} = \frac{ne}{qpois(C, ne)} \quad (8)$$

[0042] This is the lower curve in Fig. 2, which shows ber_{norm} as a function of ne . The $qpois$ -function gives the average number NE as a function of Poisson distribution.

[0043] Formula for the early fail limit:

$$ber_{norm} = \frac{ne}{qpois(D, ne)} \quad (9)$$

[0044] This is the upper curve in Fig. 2.

[0045] As the early pass limit is not defined for $ne = 0$ (normally the case at the very beginning of the test for a good DUT), an artificial error event with the first sample can be introduced. When the first real error event occurs, the artificial error is replaced by this real one. This gives the shortest possible measurement time for an ideal good DUT. For example $ns=5000$ for $BER_{limit}=0.001$ and probability $D = D_1 = D_2 = 0.2\%$.

[0046] As the early fail limit is not defined for small $ne < k$ (in the example above $k=7$) due to singularities, the early fail limit at $ne=k$ is extended with a vertical line upwards. This ensures that a broken DUT hits the early fail limit in any case after a few samples, approx. 15 in the example. In other words, the test is not stopped as long as ne is smaller than k .

[0047] With each new sample and/or error a new test is considered, reusing all former results. With each new test the preliminary data for ns , ne and ber and ber_{norm} are updated and a ber_{norm}/ne coordinate is entered into the ber_{norm} -diagram. This is shown in Fig. 3. Once the trajectory crosses the early fail limit ($ber_{norm}(ne, D)$) or the early pass limit ($ber_{norm}(ne, C)$) the test may be stopped and the conclusion of early fail or early pass may be drawn based on this instant.

[0048] Fig. 3 shows the curves for early fail and early pass. ber_{norm} is shown as a function of the number of errors ne . For the simple example demonstrated in Fig. 3, it is $BER_{limit} = 0.2 = 1/5$ and the final Bit Error Ratio $BER = 0.25$ ($1/4$). The test starts with the first bit sample, for which no error is detected. For the second sample, a first error is detected and the preliminary Bit Error Ratio $ber = ne/ns = 1/2$ and $ber_{norm} = ber/BER_{limit}$ becomes $1/2 : 1/5 = 5/2$. ber_{norm} after the second sample is marked with a cross a in Fig. 3. For the third, fourth and fifth sample, no further error occurs and ber_{norm} subsequently becomes $5/3$, $5/4$ and $5/5$, respectively, which is marked with the crosses b, c and d in Fig. 3, respectively. The sixth sample brings a new error and ne becomes 2. Consequently, $ber = ne/ns$ becomes $2/6$ and ber_{norm} becomes $10/6$. This situation is marked with cross e in Fig. 3. For the seventh, eighth and ninth sample, no further error occurs and the situation after the seventh, eighth and ninth sample is marked with crosses f, g, h in Fig. 3, respectively. The tenth sample brings a third error. Consequently, ber becomes $3/10$ and ber_{norm} becomes $15/10$. This situation is marked with cross i in Fig. 3. As can be seen from Fig. 3, the trajectory is between the early fail curve and the early pass curve at the beginning of the test, but converges to a line Z, which crosses the early fail curve after about forty errors. After forty errors, it can thus be decided that the tested DUT early fails the test.

[0049] If no early stop occurs the BER test may be stopped, after the following condition is valid:

$$ne \geq K$$

and the DUT shall be passed, if ns is sufficiently high. K is a maximum number of errors. For example K can be 200.

[0050] If the trajectory neither crosses the early fail curve nor the early pass curve after K (for example 200) errors have occurred, the DUT can be finally passed. If the DUT, however, is rather good or rather bad, the tests can be stopped much earlier, long before the $K = 200$ errors have occurred. This significantly shortens the total test time.

[0051] The following gives a worst case interpretation of the example with $C=0.998$, $ne=200$ then $NE_{high} = 242$ and $NE_{low} = 161$. The relative distance of NE_{high} and NE_{low} is 50%. Such a DUT tested against $BER 0.0015$ (instead of 0.001) is passed and is bad with the same low probability 0.2%. At this point the longest possible measurement time can be calculated: $ns=242000$ for $BER_{limit}=0.001$, probability 0.2% and $K = 200$.

[0052] With given D_1 and D_2 the early fail curve and the early pass curves in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 can be calculated before the test is started. During the test only $ber_{norm} = ne/NE_{limit}$ has to be calculated and to be compared with the early pass limit and the early fail limit as explained with respect to Fig. 3. Thus, no intensive calculation has to be done during the test.

Claims

1. Method for testing the Bit Error Ratio BER of a device against a maximal allowable Bit Error Ratio BER_{limit} with an early pass criterion, whereby the early pass criterion is allowed to be wrong only by a small probability D_1 , with the following steps

- measuring ns bits of the output of the device, thereby detecting ne erroneous bits of these ns bits,
- assuming that the likelihood distribution giving the distribution of the number of erroneous bits ni in a fixed number of samples of bits is PD(NE,ni), wherein NE is the average number of erroneous bits, obtaining PD_{high} from

$$D_1 = \int_0^{ns} PD_{high}(NE_{high}, ni) dni$$

wherein PD_{high} is the worst possible likelihood distribution containing the measured ne erroneous bits with the probability D₁,

- obtaining the average number of erroneous bits NE_{high} for the worst possible likelihood distribution PD_{high},
- comparing NE_{high} with NE_{limit} = BER_{limit} · ns,
- if NE_{limit} is higher than NE_{high} stopping the test and deciding that the device has early passed the test and
- if NE_{limit} is smaller than NE_{high} continuing the test whereby increasing ns.

2. Method for testing the Bit Error Ratio BER according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the likelihood distribution PD(NE,ni) is the Poisson distribution.

3. Method for testing the Bit Error Ratio BER according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized in that** for avoiding a undefined situation for ne=0 starting the test with an artificial error ne=1 not incrementing ne then a first error occurs.

4. Method for testing the Bit Error Ratio BER of a device against a maximal allowable Bit Error Ratio BER_{limit} with an early fail criterion, whereby the early fail criterion is allowed to be wrong only by a small probability D₂, with the following steps

- measuring ns bits of the output of the device, thereby detecting ne erroneous bits of these ns bits,
- assuming that the likelihood distribution giving the distribution of the number of erroneous bits ni in a fixed number of samples of bits is PD(NE,ni), wherein NE is the average number of erroneous bits, obtaining PD_{low} from the

$$D_2 = \int_{ne}^{\infty} PD_{low}(NE_{low}, ni) dni$$

wherein PD_{low} is the best possible likelihood distribution containing the measured ne erroneous bits with the probability D₂,

- obtaining the average number of erroneous bits NE_{low} for the best possible likelihood distribution PD_{low},
- comparing NE_{low} with NE_{limit} = BER_{limit} · ns,
- if NE_{limit} is smaller than NE_{low} stopping the test and deciding that the device has early failed the test and
- if NE_{limit} is higher than NE_{low} continuing the test whereby increasing ns.

5. Method for testing the Bit Error Ratio BER according to claim 4, **characterized in that** the likelihood distribution PD(NE,ni) is the Poisson distribution.

6. Method for testing the Bit Error Ratio BER according to claim 4 or 5,

characterized in that

for avoiding a undefined situation for $ne < k$, wherein k is a small number of errors, not stopping the test as long as ne is smaller than k .

7. Method for testing the Bit Error Ratio BER according to claim 6,
characterized in that
 k is 7.

8. Method for testing the Bit Error Ratio BER according to any of claims 4 to 7,
characterized by

an additional early pass criterion, whereby the early pass criterion is allowed to be wrong only by a small probability D_1 , with the following additional steps

- assuming that the likelihood distribution giving the distribution of the number of erroneous bits ni in a fixed number of samples of bits is $PD(NE, ni)$, wherein NE is the average number of erroneous bits, obtaining PD_{high} from

$$D_1 = \int_0^{ns} PD_{high}(NE_{high}, ni) dni$$

wherein PD_{high} is the worst possible likelihood distribution containing the measured ne erroneous bits with the probability D_1 ,

- obtaining the average number of erroneous bits NE_{high} for the worst possible likelihood distribution PD_{high} ,
- comparing NE_{high} with $NE_{limit} = BER_{limit} \cdot ns$,
- if NE_{limit} is higher than NE_{high} stopping the test and deciding that the device has early passed the test and
- if NE_{limit} is smaller than NE_{high} continuing the test, whereby increasing ns .

9. Method for testing the Bit Error Ratio BER according to claim 8,
characterized in that

for avoiding a undefined situation for $ne=0$ starting the test with an artificial error $ne=1$ not incrementing ne then a first error occurs.

10. Method for testing the Bit Error Ratio BER according to claim 8 or 9,
characterized in that

the probability D_1 for the wrong early pass criterion and the probability D_2 for the wrong early fail criterion are equal ($D_1=D_2$).

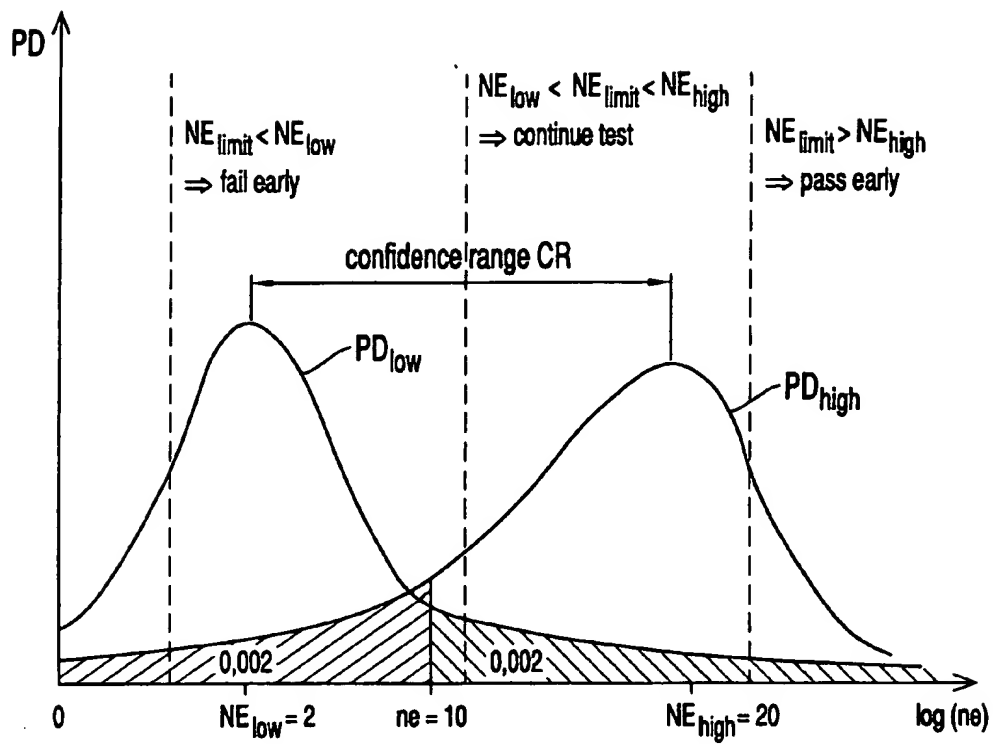


Fig. 1

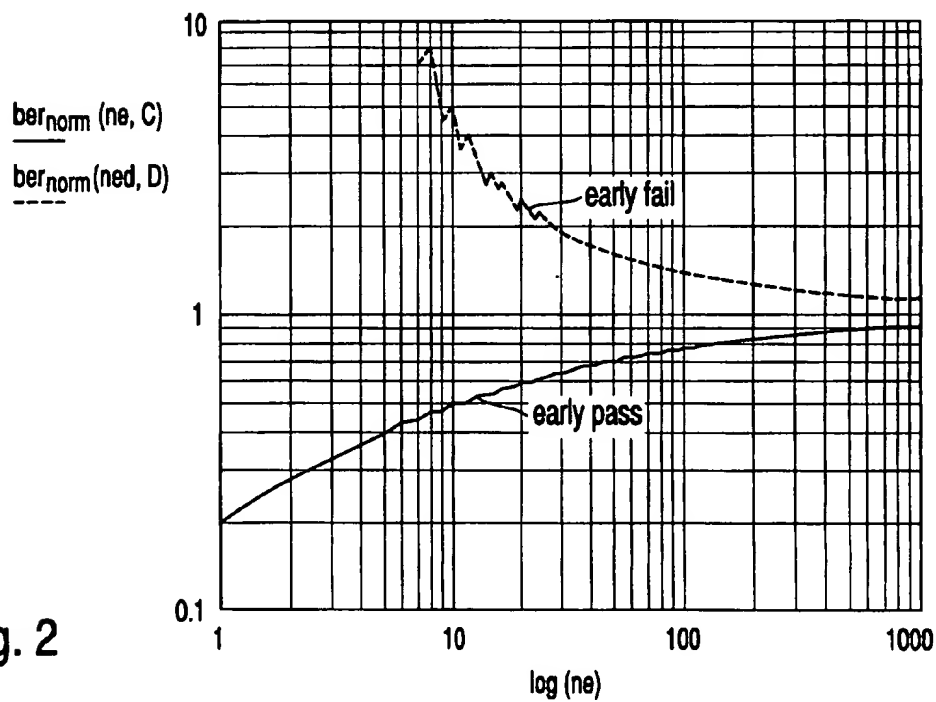


Fig. 2

BER limit = 0.2 (1/5) Actual BER = 0.25 (1/4)

Number of sample,	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 etc...
Sequence, 0: correct, 1: error	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
BER		1/2	1/3	1/4	1/5	2/6	2/7	2/8	2/9	3/10
BER _{norm}		5/2	5/3	5/4	5/5	10/6	10/7	10/8	10/9	15/10

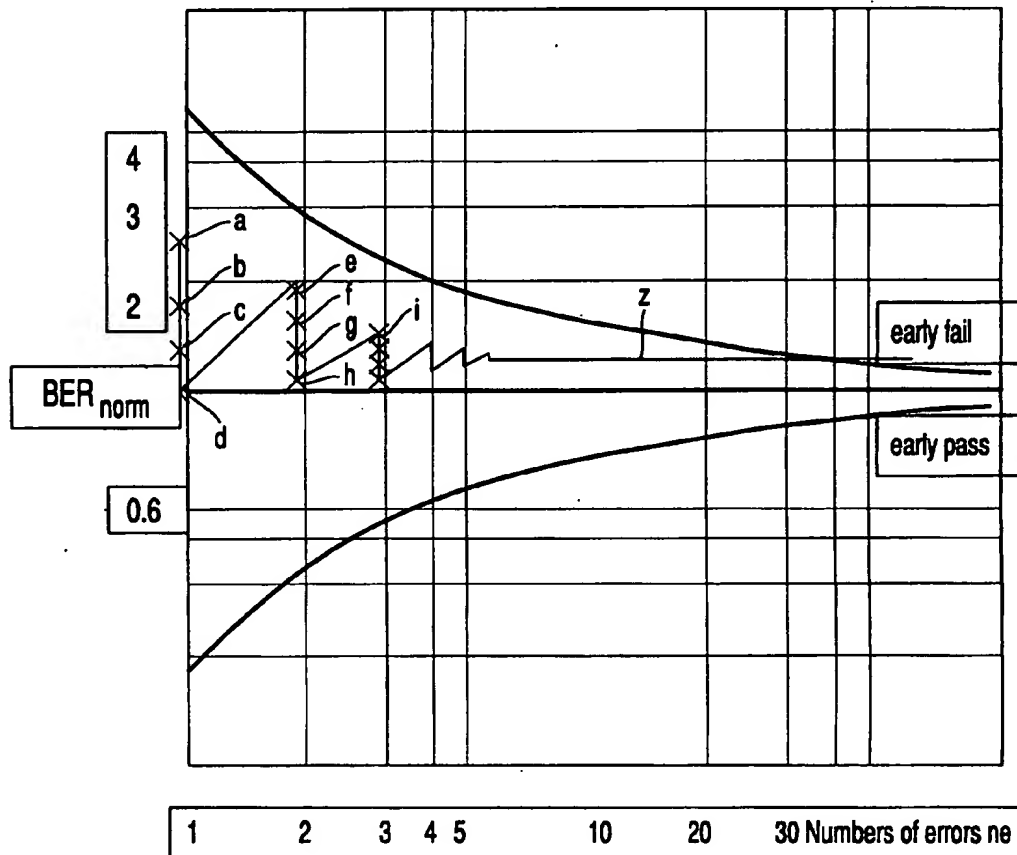


Fig. 3



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 01 11 0327

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 18 October 2001	Examiner López Márquez, T
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